

Let's stop the student loan interest rates from doubling July 1. Stop the political games. Let's support American students to attain their highest achievements.

RURAL POST OFFICES

(Mr. CRAWFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRAWFORD. I rise today to highlight a subject that is personal in Arkansas's First Congressional District: the proposed closure of thousands of rural post offices across the country.

This week I sent a letter to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe asking him to give the House of Representatives time to pass meaningful postal reform legislation. As it stands now, over 3,600 post offices are slated for closure on May 15. In my district alone, 100 post offices have been put on the closure list.

In November, I filed the Protecting Our Rural American Post Offices Act of 2011. The bill would prohibit the postal service from closing rural post offices that do not have an alternative office within 8 miles accessible by public roads. The bill is an effort to level the field between rural and urban post office closures.

So many of the challenges we face in Washington are not Democrat versus Republican, but rather urban versus rural interests. Americans living in rural communities rely on their post offices for medicine delivery and Social Security benefits and veterans benefits, among other things. Access to postal services should not be limited to urban families.

I urge Postmaster General Donahoe to give the House time to pass meaningful postal reform legislation. The postal service cannot hope to cure all their budget woes on the backs of rural Americans.

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INVESTING IN AMERICA

(Mr. TONKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TONKO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the golden opportunity to travel with our President to the capital region of upstate New York to visit our nanotechnology center. This campus is poised for tremendous growth as we witness an investment in public and private partnership.

The President utilized that visit to showcase a very glowing example of the appropriateness of investing in advanced manufacturing. It's a great path toward job creation, job retention. The President underscored the value of investing in precision technology, in R&D, in efficiency, and in workforce development—workforce development, development that comes in many dimensions, training and retrain-

ing and apprenticeship programs, and, yes, the path to success via higher education.

Speaking to that, our higher education dreams need to be fostered with affordability and availability. The 3.4 percent cap on interest rates for student loans cannot grow to 6.8 percent. We will dumb down the dreams of our young adults who are looking to go onward with their careers through higher education. We need to pass legislation so as to hold that cap at 3.4 percent, and we cannot allow it to grow come July 1 because of inaction by this Congress. I ask us to pass that measure in this House.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in order to recognize National Teacher Appreciation Week by sharing my heartfelt praise of Pennsylvania's teachers and educators throughout this great country.

I would like to recognize Tricia Miller, Pennsylvania's Teacher of the Year from Penns Valley Area School District located in my home county in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District, and Margaret McLaughlin of Garnet Valley Area School District in eastern Pennsylvania, who was the recipient of the Education Support Professional of the Year Award for Pennsylvania. Their accomplishments are impressive, and both are the type who go above and beyond when helping our students achieve academic success.

Like so many other teachers, they remain tirelessly committed to high achievement and developing the next generation of leaders. And while these two are Pennsylvania's award winners, there are countless others who dedicate their lives day in and day out to ensure that students live up to their individual potential and strive to push young learners to surpass that potential.

As a Nation, we must make sure that we celebrate outstanding educators every day. During National Teacher Appreciation Week, I want to thank all teachers for their hard work and dedication.

RECOGNIZING NATIONAL TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor our teachers during National Teacher Appreciation Week. Teachers do not merely just teach in the classroom, they listen to their students and gently push them to reach their full potential. Teachers serve as role models and mentors.

Because of the mentorship of my teachers in high school, I applied for college. I was fortunate to be given a scholarship and an opportunity that I would not have known about if it were not for my teachers. Upon graduating, I decided to give back to my community and became a teacher.

New Jersey has among the most talented teachers in the country, and our students are lucky to learn from them. While we are honoring them this week, we should be thankful for their service every day. We trust teachers with our most valuable resources—our children.

While we ask teachers to prepare our children to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must give them the tools to rise to these challenges. Competitive salaries and financial resources must be provided.

Let's join together in recognizing our teachers in New Jersey and across the country. Take the time to thank your teacher for their leadership and inspiration.

EDUCATION IS KEY TO SOUND FUTURE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, as a former community college trustee member, I understand that good education is key to a sound future. Sadly, many working families in America now find themselves unable to afford higher education for their children. And even worse, if Congress does not act soon, the interest rate for students will double from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent; 7.4 million American students will face thousands of dollars in new debt if we do not act before July.

Last week, House Republicans showed they are unwilling to work on a real solution to this crisis. In a sham vote, Republicans put forward a bill to pay for the interest rate halt by slashing funds for women and children's health services.

America's young people deserve better. Let's keep their dreams alive. Let's get serious about a bipartisan solution to strengthen Pell Grants and keep student loan interest rates low. Let's help our students become the leaders of tomorrow.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

(Ms. BASS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. BASS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as National Foster Care Month. The goal of this special month is to raise awareness about the experiences and needs of more than 400,000 youth in the foster care system.

The Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth asked young people around the country to tell us their experiences via our Web site, Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth. Throughout the month,